2016 discharge: European Union Agency for Railways

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PURPOSE: presentation by the Commission of the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2016, as part of the 2016 discharge procedure.

Analysis of the accounts of the **European Railway Agency (ERA)**.

CONTENT: the organisational governance of the EU consists of institutions, agencies and other EU bodies whose expenditure is included in the general budget of the Union.

This Commission document concerns the EU's consolidated accounts for the year 2016 and details how spending by the EU institutions and bodies was carried out. The consolidated annual accounts of the EU provide financial information on the activities of the institutions, agencies and other bodies of the EU from an accrual accounting and budgetary perspective.

It is the responsibility of the Commission's Accounting Officer to prepare the EU's consolidated annual accounts and ensure that they present fairly, in all material aspects, the financial position, the result of the operations and the cash flows of the EU institutions and bodies, including the **European Railway Agency** (ERA), with a view to granting discharge.

Discharge procedure: the final step of a budget lifecycle is the discharge of the budget for a given financial year. It represents the political aspect of the external control of budget implementation and is the decision by which the European Parliament, acting on a Council recommendation, "**releases**" the Commission (and other EU bodies) from its responsibility for management of a given budget by marking the end of that budget's existence. The European Parliament is the discharge authority within the EU.

The discharge procedure may produce three outcomes: (i) the granting; (ii) postponement or; (iii) the refusal of the discharge.

The final discharge report including specific recommendations to the Commission for action is adopted in plenary by the European Parliament and are subject to an annual follow up report in which the Commission outlines the concrete actions it has taken to implement the recommendations made.

Each agency is subject to its own discharge procedure, including the **ERA**.

The European Railway Agency: the Agency, which is located in Lille-Valenciennes (FR), was created by Regulation (EC) No 881/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Its aim is to enhance the level of interoperability of railway systems and develop a common approach to safety in order to contribute to creating a more competitive European railway sector with a high level of safety.

As regards the Agency’s accounts, these are presented in detail in the document on the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for 2016:

Commitment appropriations:

- available: EUR 28 million;
- made: EUR 28 million.

Payment appropriations:

- available: EUR 30 million;
- made: EUR 28 million.

For further details on expenditure, please refer to the final accounts of the ERA.